

VZCZCXRO7593
RR RUEHDBU RUEHLN RUEHPOD RUEHVK
DE RUEHYG #0083 3501112
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 161112Z DEC 09
FM AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1398
INFO RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1042
RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHVK/AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK 0631
RUEHLN/AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG 0621
RUEHYG/AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG 1436

UNCLAS YEKATERINBURG 000083

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR EUR/RUS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAIR](#) [EINV](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: NEW GOVERNOR STRESSES ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION

REF: YEKAT 77

Sensitive but Unclassified. Not for Internet distribution.

¶1. (SBU) Newly appointed Sverdlovsk oblast governor Aleksandr Misharin (see reftel) hosted a holiday toast for the Urals-based diplomatic corps at the governor's residence on December 10. For most of the foreign diplomats present, this was the first face to face meeting with the new governor. The number of consulates, trade representative offices, and honorary consulates located in Yekaterinburg now exceeds 20. Noting that the majority of diplomatic missions must rent premises in Yekaterinburg, the governor offered to provide land to missions willing to invest in building their own buildings as the Chinese are reportedly planning.

¶2. (SBU) Misharin's presentation and subsequent interaction with the assembled diplomats revealed his overriding focus on revitalizing the region's economy and his interest in stimulating foreign investment. Misharin noted that the region's foreign trade turnover in 2009 stood at about US\$ 7 billion, a 40% decline from 2008. Though the governor failed to mention that the U.S. is the region's leading trade partner according to the oblast ministry of Foreign and External Economic Relations, he did note that France was the only country with which trade increased during the year. After expressing his appreciation for the cultural and educational contributions of Yekaterinburg's diplomatic missions, the governor invited more international trade delegations and business exhibitions in the future, noting that construction of a new convention/exhibition center would begin this year. Misharin reiterated his goal of modernizing the regional economy along the lines of President Medvedev's November address. To this end, infrastructure projects, including a proposed high-speed rail link between Yekaterinburg and Moscow, will get special attention. Again, he mentioned the Chinese as potential investors in this project.

¶3. (SBU) When his turn came to propose a toast, the CG recalled the fifteen year history of the Consulate General in Yekaterinburg and highlighted the Boeing Corporation's \$30 million investment in its joint venture with Russian titanium giant VSMPO-Avisma in northern Sverdlovsk oblast as an example of significant long-term business cooperation. In his response, the governor proposed the establishment of a direct air connection between Yekaterinburg and the United States.

¶4. (SBU) Though less spontaneous and gregarious than his predecessor Eduard Rossel, the new governor appeared well-briefed and was at ease interacting with the diplomatic corps. New cabinet appointments are expected by the end of the year.

SANDUSKY